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NEWS

Winchester Democratic Town Committee talks future of education in Massachusetts

January 13, 2025 . 6:42 PM — 3 min read

Rep. Michael Day speaks to members of the Winchester Democratic Town Committee as Legal Director for the Center for Law and Education Sky Kochenour, far left, and Sen. Jason Lewis listen. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

The following was submitted by Alan H. Field, of the Winchester Dem Town Committee:

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On the evening of Jan. 8, about 45 people braved the bitter cold and windy evening to attend a lively discussion at a Democratic Town Committee event.

The draw? The issue of how the new administration in Washington might affect public education in Massachusetts and what residents of Winchester and elsewhere might do about it.

Three panelists made short presentations: Sen. Jason Lewis, Rep. Mike Day, and Legal Director for the Center for Law and Education Sky Kochenour.

Lewis began with a comprehensive summary of housing, climate, health, education, gun law, transportation and tax related legislation and actions over the past year. This might have seemed a bit off topic, but it demonstrated how much we can do in Massachusetts regardless of what the federal government does.

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Winchester residents and members of the Democratic Town Committee listen to speakers during a meeting on Jan. 8. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

The senator then turned to the topic at hand. He felt that Title 1 funds coming to the state would be hard to cut — would take an act of Congress — but that some relatively small grant programs to the state could be cut.

He expressed greater concern about what the federal government could due to harm immigrants, including school children, in our state.

Day followed, expressing some of the collective anxiety that perhaps all in the room were feeling about the new administration. He felt, or hoped, that internal differences in the administration might temper the harm they might do.

Like Lewis, he felt that Massachusetts should be able to continue to thrive and make progress on a variety of fronts in spite of Washington.

An audience member suggested that up to $1 million federal dollars could be withheld from education in Winchester and Day responded that with the state's "rainy day" and other education-directed funds, we should be able to get through the next two years, after which there could be a change in the makeup of the Legislature in Washington.

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Rep. Michael Day, right, and Legal Director for the Center for Law and Education Sky Kochenour, left, listen as Sen. Jason Lewis speaks on Jan. 8. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

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Finally, Kochenour spoke about future possible federal government action and inaction. Like the two previous speakers, he felt that it would be hard for the new administration to implement some threatened actions. But he was more concerned about inaction.

We would be less likely to see proactive efforts to protect and ad[illegible] various educational and social rights. This could stall progress, particularly

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for less advantaged communities and specifically for learners who are bilingual and/or have disabilities.

Kochenour also reminded us that educators need stronger support for today's multicultural realities and not to be too smug about educational outcomes in Massachusetts. Even in Winchester, many students do not meet proficiency standards, let alone exceed them.

Members of the Winchester Democratic Town Committee listen to Sen. Jason Lewis and Rep. Michael Day. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

Many issues raised by the audience were aired and discussed. By meeting's end it seemed a major sentiment was that we need to talk more with each other, as at the meeting, and to roll up our sleeves to keep working to improve education in Massachusetts.

We also need to protect and advance health, justice and compassion in the state.

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The mood throughout was friendly, positive yet determined.

The event, with refreshments, was organized by the Winchester Democratic Town Committee and was held in the home of one of its members.

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 maintains critical

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Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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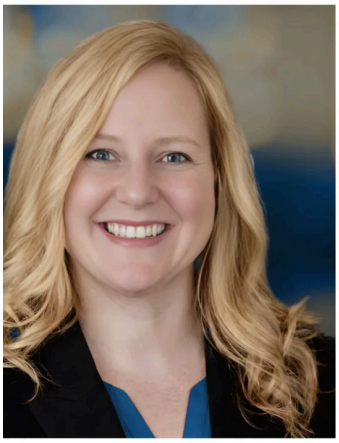

EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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